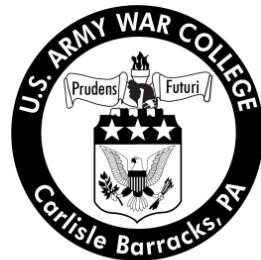


Strategy Research Project

Sustaining Army Civilians: Senior Leaders' Responsibility

by

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United States Army War College
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

SUSTAINING ARMY CIVILIANS: SENIOR LEADERS' RESPONSIBILITY

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SUSTAINING ARMY CIVILIANS: SENIOR LEADERS' RESPONSIBILITY

When your weapons are dulled and ardor damped, your strength exhausted and treasure spent, neighboring rulers will take advantage of your distress to act. And even though you have wise counselors, none will be able to lay good plans for the future.

—Sun Tzu¹

The most important Army asset is human capital. It is imperative that individuals on every level operate within the team to guarantee mission accomplishment.

Developing quality professional Department of the Army Civilian (DAC) leaders provides a foundation for achieving and maintaining the critical strategic leadership competencies the Army and the nation require into and beyond the 21st century. After serving the Army in both a military and civilian capacity for 29 years, over 10 of which have been as a supervisor, it is author's opinion that leaders of Army Civilians need to do a better job hiring, developing and providing leadership for those they lead. This SRP will provide a brief history of the Army Civilian Corps and the role Army civilians have played in accomplishing the mission throughout the years. This SRP will also discuss three key components that are essential in the sustainability process: strategic recruitment/hiring, active leader development, and the key competencies needed by today's leader to build a positive culture for the organization.

Tomorrow's Army civilians must be multifunctional, with diverse skill sets. They must remain self-aware and highly adaptive to change. Army civilians have the opportunity to become future leaders who embody the Warrior Ethos in all aspects, from war fighting to statesmanship to business management. The hiring and development of capable and confident Army civilians to serve the needs of the Army into and beyond the 21st century must be one of the Army's principal objectives. The need for top-quality

civilian employees will be reinforced as the Army reshapes and streamlines its forces. “Now, as never before, we increasingly call upon our Civilian Corps to assume greater levels of responsibility throughout the Army, and we must invest in them accordingly.”²

History of the Department of the Army Civilian

“We’ve come a long way from the drivers, craftsman, and laborers of the Revolutionary War – but where are we now and where are we going?”³ Civilians have been an integral part of the U.S. Army since the Revolutionary War. In 1776, the Board of War and Ordnance was established. This board had the responsibility to provide equipment and dispatch troops; account for arms, equipment and ammunition; maintain personnel records; and disburse funds. The Board consisted of five members of the Continental Congress, clerks and a paid secretary — Richard Peters, the first Army civilian.⁴ The Continental Army initially hired 600 civilians and paid them 20 shillings a day to haul supplies needed to sustain the Soldiers. During this period, Congress urged for the use of civilians to ensure that the Soldiers remained on battlefield in order not to diminish the strength of the line regiments. Throughout the Mexican-American War Army Civilians were used as mule, horse and carriage drivers and 25,000 Army Civilians were heavily relied upon during the Civil War to support rail transport operations of over 2,000 miles of constructed or captured rail lines that directly supported the Union Army.⁵ Army civilians continued to be a vital part of the force through World War I and II, Korea and Vietnam and were used to fill non-military jobs crucial to support military continuity of operations. During the time period between the Revolutionary War and Vietnam there was an approximate ratio of one civilian supporting six Soldiers in the combat zone.⁶

A 19 June 2006 memorandum signed by Dr. Francis J. Harvey, then Secretary of the Army, and General Peter J. Schoomaker, then Chief of Staff of the Army cited the need to unify the Army civilian service. These Army Leaders were seeking to capitalize on the commitment of civilians who serve as an integral part of the Army team. To do this, they established the Army Civilian Corps which provided an identity for the civilian force comparable to their military counterparts - the Officer and Noncommissioned Officer Corps.⁷ Like their uniformed brethren, Army civilians are committed to the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. The Army Civilian Corps creed documents the purpose and role of the Army Civilian and consists of the following:

- I am an Army Civilian a member of the Army Team.
- I am dedicated to our Army, our Soldiers and Civilians.
- I will always support the mission.
- I provide stability and continuity during war and peace.
- I support and defend the Constitution of the United States and consider it an honor to serve our Nation and our Army.
- I live the Army values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.
- I am an Army Civilian.

As of March 2011, approximately 279,000 civilians were serving in the Department of the Army. If the Army Corps of Engineers and personnel supported by non-appropriated funds are included, this number exceeds 335,000 – making up approximately 23 percent of the total Army force. In 2010, over 4,300 Army civilians deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan.⁸ Dr. Joseph W. Westphal, Under Secretary of the Army has acknowledged that Army civilians represent “a huge part of our generating force, 60% in fact.”⁹ He further recognized their considerable contributions to the Army:

This generating force performs the incredible heavy lifting in support of Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) - training, supplying and engineering the force so our war fighters can concentrate on their missions and come home safely. You have deployed and stood in support of our war fighters during the most dangerous and difficult periods of these conflicts. But, this nation's ability to sustain the all-volunteer force will be difficult and challenged if we do not prioritize development and investment in our most important institutional asset, our people. Now, as never before, the Army is increasingly calling upon our Civilian Corps to assume greater levels of responsibility and accountability at organizations throughout our Service.¹⁰

Get the Right People on the Bus

In Good to Great, Jim Collins advises that, "to build a successful organization and team you must get the right people on the bus."¹¹ As leaders, it is not enough to say that it is paramount to get the right people on the bus. To do this, leaders must identify who the right people are, get them on the bus and assure that they are in the right seat. This sentiment is echoed by Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), Thomas H. Lamont, in a September 2011 memorandum to Army leaders laying out his vision for effective hiring:

Effectively attract/recruit a high caliber workforce in accordance with measurements identified in organizational staffing/hiring goals...Identify current/future position requirements to ensure recruiting is appropriately focused and timely to produce high quality candidate posts. Act responsible and timely on all hiring actions.¹²

The Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS) has developed four key steps to the hiring process that assist the leader to get the right people in the right jobs at the right time: planning, attracting the right candidate, making hiring decisions, and shaping early experiences.¹³

"Recruiting the best employees for your agency is one of the most important and pressing activities you perform as a manager."¹⁴ The time invested in up-front planning pays a large dividend in reductions in the time it takes to fill a vacant position and how

well the new employee meets the mission needs of the organization. Planning for hiring requires sound strategy and careful implementation. Fundamentally, leaders must know and understand the organization mission and goals. Sitting down with the leaders of the organization and identifying individuals within the organization that if cloned, would make ideal candidates are good indicators of what type of individual would best meet the needs of the organization. Leaders must also be familiar with the current DoD and federal labor pool, along with outside sources. Then these leaders must know how to recruit the best candidates.¹⁵ Ascertaining the selectee's primary responsibilities and clearly articulating them in the job announcement enables leaders to attract the most qualified person for the vacant position. The organization's Human Resources (HR) professional can assist in ensuring that the job announcement and the position description are accurate and easy to understand. HR can suggest available sources for job candidates, such as universities and professional associations. In coordination with Human Resources leaders should ensure that the job announcement succinctly states the requirements of the job.¹⁶ Acknowledging the need to attract quality candidates to quickly fill vacant positions with the right people, the Installation Management Command established the Talent Management Center (TMC) — a mechanism to find and place individuals with the right skill set in the right place at the right time within the Command. "The TMC is poised to lead the way in seeking out and acquiring the human capital that will reshape our approach to business operations."¹⁷

After resumes have been provided by HR, the leader must, in a timely manner, set aside time to conduct interviews. When leaders begin to choose who will "get on the bus", they must ensure that they conduct strategic interviews and check references. A

strategic interview asks questions that the resume does not capture, such as the candidates' initiative, self-assessment, the ability to deal with and lead change, and personal character. During the author's service as the Deputy Garrison Commander for US Army Garrison in Schweinfurt, Germany, our interviews found the following questions to be most useful: "how would your last three bosses rate your job performance, 1-10 and why; why do you want this job; please describe the best peer at work that you have had in the last five years, and why; and finally, knowing we all think differently at times, please describe a time when you disagreed with a bosses' priority, and how you handled the situation."¹⁸ Effective interviews show leaders what the prospective employee will bring to the organization. But the selection process must conclude with a careful check of candidates' references: "Reference checking will provide you with the details on a candidate's skills, work habits, and personality, all of which are factors to consider in evaluating whether or not your candidate is a fit for the job and the organization."¹⁹

Bringing in new employees requires more than just processing paperwork and completing checklists for new hires.

Originally, the process of converting a newly-hired stranger into a fully-contributing and knowledgeable employee was left to the personnel department's most junior benefits clerk in the first-day orientation program, with the employee left to sink-or-swim her way to success from there. Today, "onboarding" is the most recent addition to a manager's checklist. Companies realize that there's a high payoff in this unique early honeymoon period by making the new employee feel welcome and comfortable in her new surroundings, assuring the person that she's made a good decision, and minimizing the time it takes to become productive members of her new workgroup.²⁰

Effective onboarding involves making sure new employees learn the culture and accepted practices of one's organization, and sharing the information they need to be

effective in their roles. Onboarding a new employee should not be an afterthought. Rather, it should start as soon as the employee accepts the position. Assigning a sponsor to assist in this effort is a vital task. Choosing the right sponsor is instrumental: select a superstar, not someone who simply needs something to do. Make sure that the sponsor is not on vacation or under deadline during the new employee's first few weeks on the job. The sponsor should send out an introductory e-mail to all other team members in advance of the new hire's start date to provide a brief background on the employee as well as an overview of the position the new comer will fill. Finally, it is extremely important to remember that new employees may bring innovation and new ideas. If this individual is onboarded correctly, he or she will be willing to bring these ideas to the organization for the benefit of all. "A good job of onboarding can take weeks off the learning curve and get the newbie up to fully-productive fast."²¹

While hiring is key component for sustaining human capital, it is only the beginning. Leaders must truly invest in the success of those they lead. To secure this investment, leaders must commit to the professional development of recent hires. Employee development must start as soon as an employee enters civilian service and it is the leader that has the critical responsibility to ensure the employee is provided with the tools to ensure success. Active career development of the Army Civilian will benefit the employee, the Commander and most importantly, the Army. The Army Management Staff College (AMSC) was chartered to educate and prepare Army Civilians to become future strategic leaders. According to Colonel Stevenson L. Reed, AMSC Commandant, "The Army must prepare our future leaders to be multi-skilled and agile, equipped to face the challenges of the operating environment in the 21st century."²² Through a

progressive and sequential program, the Civilian Education System (CES) provides the Army Civilian Corps the opportunity to develop key leadership skills. This professional development consists of distributed learning and resident instruction. The program focuses on leadership competencies required at each level of responsibility and assignment as Army civilians advance through their career.

As budgets continue to decrease, there is a need for leaders with the requisite abilities to transform current business processes to ensure that the mission is accomplished with the least possible expenditure of resources. The Army will need leaders that are “detail-oriented in order to understand the nuances of their mission and the relationship between mission and resources.”²³ These leaders require the skill set to look at and improve day to day business operations. Army leaders must also have a clear understanding of the Army’s financial management process and take ownership of the process by “translating income statement and balance sheet line items into meaningful relational numbers to identify the root cause of expense growth”²⁴ In a visit to the economics department at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. General Martin E. Dempsey, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff for the Army stressed the need to develop our leaders for the future. He emphatically stated that “Economics is now a necessary skill for defense leaders.”²⁵ Incorporating training that will provide Army leaders with financial management skills into all levels of the CES program will benefit Army leaders of today and prepare them for the future.

Army leaders must continue to improve, refine and update the CES curricula in order to keep this professional education current. Leaders are responsible for assuring that those they lead have a clear understanding of the competencies they need in order

to succeed. Leaders should encourage their DACs to take full advantage of CES opportunities for professional development:

Army Civilians are a vital component to the Army team, critical to the Army's success, and thus ultimately, vital to the Nation's security. The contemporary operating environment requires Civilians to assume responsibilities previously performed by military personnel, and demands capable, agile Civilian leaders at all levels, who are prepared to face any challenge. To fill this leadership requirement, we must invest in the training and development of our Civilian leaders to provide a more professional, capable, and agile Civilian Corps critical to the Army's mission.²⁶

While serving as the Deputy Garrison Commander, the author had the unique opportunity to discuss the benefits of attending the CES program with fellow leaders and subordinates. Their common message was that the CES curriculum was highly instrumental in inspiring thoughts that have enabled former students to become more effective and productive leaders. Graduates also added that the overall experience garnered from the training empowered them with the ability to positively influence others within their organizations. They went on to articulate that they were eager to return to their duty stations to implement what they had learned, and to demonstrate to their supervisors that the organization's investment in the training would yield a positive return both for the them, and for the organization. Just as importantly; CES courses provided future leaders with opportunities to develop meaningful, lifelong professional relationships with others outside of their organizations.

The apex of the Army CES is the Senior Service College (SSC). The SSC program prepares Army civilians for positions of great responsibility within the Army and DOD. SSC provides advanced education for individuals who have completed the CES training program through the Advanced Course or those who have received constructive credit for comparable education or previous work experience (HQDA Operations and

Planning (G-3/5/7) is the organization responsible for adjudicating awards of constructive credit). Selection to attend a SSC is a highly competitive process and nominations for Army civilian slots are made by the HQDA Civilian Executive Board. The Army sets aside civilian quotas for the Army War College (AWC) residence program located in Carlisle, PA and the Army War College Distance Education (AWC-DE) course. AWC-DE is the Army's two-year non-resident program. Army Civilians are also eligible to attend The Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF) residence program at Fort McNair, Washington, DC.²⁷ The AWC "develops, inspires and serves strategic leaders for the wise and effective application of national power, in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational environment, emphasizing development and employment of land power."²⁸ ICAF "prepares selected military and civilians for strategic leadership and success in developing national strategy and in evaluating, marshalling, and managing resources in the execution of that strategy."²⁹

Upon completion of the SSC the graduates have learned how to operate and think in the strategic environment. They also learn how to deal with complex unstructured "wicked" problems and be better suited to effectively lead change in their organizations. Similar to their Army officer counterparts, Army Civilians graduating from SSC are assigned under the SSC Graduate Placement Program (GPP) in positions of greater responsibility in order to optimize their education and to provide the greatest return on investment for the individual, the Army, and DOD.

While training and education are a vital part of the Army Civilian of the 21st century; tracking professional development and understanding what training is required and essential can be difficult. The Army has developed a tracking system that will

assist in that effort – Army Career Tracker (ACT). “The ACT allows Soldiers, officers, and civilians to manage their career objectives and monitor their progress toward career requirements and goals.”³⁰ ACT also gives leaders the ability to monitor and track the training and development of their subordinates. Vicki Brown, the Army’s chief of Civilian Training and Leader Development Division, emphasizes that it is also the civilians’ responsibility to be proactive in their careers: “One of my goals is to motivate Army civilians to be proactive with their own personal and professional development, to show what programs are out there for them, but also for them to understand the impact they have on their organization and the people that they lead, or the peers that they associate with.”³¹

Investing in human capital through effective recruitment, hiring and training will increase the effectiveness of the workforce and drive organizational productivity to a higher level. The next step is to leverage the strategic investment in order to create an organization that continually strives for success. Completing this next step requires the leader of the organization to not only have the necessary competencies in order to take the capital that has been so heavily invested in, but to build a positive culture for the organization through the process of leading change.

Key Competencies Required to Build a Culture where Leaders are Committed to the Organization

In the current volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) strategic environment, it is imperative that strategic leaders have the requisite skills or leader competencies to successfully lead the organization into and beyond the 21st Century: “Leaders need to provide purpose, direction and motivation. Army leaders work hard to lead people, develop themselves, their subordinates, and organizations, and achieve

mission accomplishment across the spectrum of conflicts”³² The two most important strategic leader competencies that enable the leader to align his or her organization to operate in a VUCA environment are the ability to provide a clear vision and to effectively lead change to meet that vision.

Field Manual 6-22 (The Army Leadership Manual) describes an Army leader as “anyone who by virtue of assumed role or assigned responsibility inspires and influences people to accomplish organizational goals.”³³ The Army Leadership Manual cites eight core leader competencies and their supporting behaviors. These competencies and behaviors provide Army leaders with a clear and consistent method for conveying their expectations. These core leader competencies are: Leads Others, Extends Influence beyond the Chain of Command, Communicates, Creates a Positive Environment, Prepares Self, Develops Leaders and Gets Results. Supporting behaviors are: Leads, Develops and Achieves. The combination of these core leader competencies will enable and allow a strategic leader to provide a clear vision while effectively leading change in the organization. “Army leaders motivate people both inside and outside the chain of command to pursue actions, focus thinking, and shape decisions for the greater good of the organization.”³⁴

According to leadership author Gill Hickman, “Strategic leaders are responsible for knowing the organization’s environment, considering what it might be like in 5 or 10 years, and setting a direction for a future that everyone can believe in.”³⁵ A fundamental strategic leader competency for a strategic leader is the ability to develop a comprehensive vision. This vision should be straightforward and idealistic; it should provide a picture of a sought-after future that inspires and makes members of the

organization want to realize the vision not because they have to, but because they are inspired to. A vision is not a multifarious plan with numerous complex objectives and detailed action steps. Most importantly, the vision should appeal to the values and ideals of the organization, to its members, and to other stakeholders.³⁶ If the leader does not articulate a clear vision, the organization may not reach its full potential. "The ability to provide clear vision is vital to the strategic leader, but forming a vision is pointless until the leader shares it with a broad audience, gains widespread support, and uses it as a compass to guide the organization."³⁷

In the current VUCA environment, leaders are not only responsible for developing a clear vision; they are also responsible for articulating the vision and keeping that vision alive. The most effective leaders are leaders that are able to think beyond the present; they have a good idea of where they want the organization to be in the future. Strategic leaders also have the ability to turn a vision into reality. John F. Kennedy shared a vision that the nation would place a man on the moon. Until he shared this vision, the Soviets had the lead in space exploration. Kennedy wanted to deny them that advantage. He articulated his vision and demonstrated how it would benefit the United States. Addressing Congress and the nation on May 25, 1961, President Kennedy declared: "I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to Earth. No single space project in this period will be more impressive to mankind or more important in the long-range exploration of space; and none will be so difficult or expensive to accomplish."³⁸ The nation was ready and willing to accept the President's challenge: Congress agreed and provided the funds to make it happen.

DACs serving in a consistently changing and complex environment can be continually challenged, inspired and committed to organizational excellence as long as their leaders' vision is clear and obtainable. John Kotter, regarded as one of the foremost speakers on the topics of Leadership and Change, claims that if a vision is ineffective or not obtainable it is no better than having no vision at all. "Pursuit of a poorly developed vision can sometimes send people over a cliff."³⁹ Significantly, effective leaders must believe in their visions. "Lip service without commitment creates a sort of dangerous illusion. People will think they are building on a solid base, only to find that the bottom of the structure eventually collapses, destroying all their work."⁴⁰ Stress, frustration and apathy may be organizational signs that the vision has been lost. Effective leaders lead by example; they keep their visions alive.

A vision is worthless without action. In the hallowed halls of the Army War College, this truism reverberates: "Vision without action is hallucination". In this constantly changing environment, strategic leaders must effectively lead change in the organization towards realizing their visions. Michael Fullan, international leader on educational change advises, "Understanding the change process is less about innovation and more about innovativeness. It is less about strategy and more about strategizing."⁴¹

Fullan asserts that "If moral purpose is job one, relationships are job two, as you can't get anywhere without them."⁴² To implement change in an organization, a leader must foster relationships among the diverse elements in the organization. The leader may articulate a clear, attainable vision, but only viable relationships within the organization will successfully drive change. Leaders must build an organizational

culture that ensures everyone is committed to the organization. “One of the most important things we (USAG Schweinfurt) did to sustain human capital was to build an organizational culture where each employee felt valued and appreciated as an integral member of an outstanding team.”⁴³ In order for an organization to succeed, the relationships between the leader and the team as well as within the team must be healthy. Fullan summarizes it this way: “It is time, in other words, to bury the cynic who said leadership is about sincerity, and once you learn to fake that, you’ve got it made.”⁴⁴ Individuals generally want to be part of their organization; they want to know the purpose of their organization. In most cases they want to make a positive difference. “When the individual soul is connected to the organization, people become connected to something deeper—the desire to contribute to a larger purpose, to feel they are part of a greater whole, a web of connection.”⁴⁵

Relationships are paramount in the process of effecting change. But they are only the starting point to effectively leading change in a complex environment. “Competent leaders know the best way to create a solid organization is to empower subordinates.”⁴⁶ Effective strategic leaders understand how to assign tasks, then step aside and allow a subordinate to do the work. Leaders then provide coaching and mentoring along the way. Subordinates must be able to communicate openly with their leaders and believe that the leaders are actively listening. Only then will those subordinates understand they have the power to assist in the organization’s realization of its vision. “Major internal transformation rarely happens unless many people assist. Yet employees generally won’t help, or can’t help, if they feel relatively powerless.”⁴⁷

Kotter further warns us that: “Major change takes time, sometimes lots of time. Zealous believers will often stay the course no matter what happens. Most of the rest of us expect to see convincing evidence that all the effort is paying off.”⁴⁸ Strategic leaders realize that attainment of a vision does not happen overnight. A frustrated sense of urgency for needed change could lead to disappointment and loss of organizational support for the vision. Successful leaders actively plan for and achieve some short-term wins during the realization of an organization’s vision, and these wins should be clearly visible to members of the organization. This provides proof to the organization members that their efforts are creating the desired outcomes. Celebrating the interim successes will motivate the organization to keep “leaning forward” to realize the vision.

Celebrating short-term wins is essential. But declaring total victory too soon may disrupt the momentum and allow the powerful forces against change to regain ground. “Irrational and political resistance to change never fully dissipates.”⁴⁹ Balancing the acknowledgement and celebration of intermediate successes with a realistic perspective that a lot more remains unfinished will challenge leaders throughout the change process. Leaders of successful efforts use the small victories along the way as motivation to launch additional projects to embed the change deeper into the organization. Such efforts ground the change into the organization’s culture. Effective strategic leaders place “change agents” in key positions. A change agent is that person within the organization that is capable of turning a leader’s vision into reality. The role of a change agent can be official or voluntary; but more importantly, they must be representative of the organization that will be responsible for realizing the leaders’ vision. The Change Agent must understand the reason and rational behind the leader’s

vision, be a champion of the vision, have the ability to communicate the vision to others in the organization, and assist the leader in managing and implementing a strategy to ensure the success of the vision. These agents understand that the change process does not happen overnight. However, some individuals will not buy into the change and will resist it at every turn. Leaders may have to remove these opponents from the organization. “Acting quickly to remove opponents who symbolize the old order not only removes people who will resist change, it also signals that you are serious about the change.”⁵⁰ Strategic leaders must persistently demonstrate their commitment to change; they are the lead agent for the change. Without sufficient and consistent leadership, change is likely to fail.

Steve Jobs, former CEO of Apple, was a strategic leader who understood the importance of creating a clear vision; he also had the unique ability to make his vision reality. Jobs envisioned that on-line digital entertainment would be the way of the future and he understood that his vision required considerable broadband capabilities. He assessed that the moment broadband penetration in the US exceeded 50%, his product would sell. To capitalize on this assessment, he developed and marketed the iPod, iPhone and iPad. When broadband expanded, Apple sales soared. Steve Jobs infused Apple with a culture of innovation. According to Bill Gates, Jobs’ long time competitor, “The world rarely sees someone who has had the profound impact Steve has had, the effects of which will be felt for many generations to come.”

Today’s strategic leader must have the ability to inspire; to influence; and to motivate those they lead. They must have the capability to observe and understand their organization’s environment in order to optimize the effectiveness and adaptability

of the organization. “A senior leader must not only have the ability to envision the future, but must also work proactively to shape the future environment to enhance goal attainment.”⁵¹ While a plethora of skill sets are needed to do this, two of the unique competencies required are the leader’s ability to provide clear vision and effectively lead change within the organization. Using these dynamic capabilities, strategic leaders can better align their organizations to thrive in a constantly changing and complex environment.

Conclusion

This Nation has been at war, relying on its all volunteer force, for the longest period of continuous combat in its history. As a result, the U.S. Army has fallen “out of balance.” Accordingly, in 2007 the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army developed a four year plan, “...to restore balance to a point where we could meet the demands on our force at a time that was predictable and sustainable for this all-volunteer Army.”⁵² Today and into the future, DACs need the ability to think strategically and creatively. They must be multi-skilled and detail oriented. Also, they must effectively lead and manage organizational change. Today’s Army civilian must be more agile and competent than ever before. As the Army continues to transition to meet the complex demands of the future, the Civilian Corps will continually be called upon to assume positions of greater levels of accountability and responsibility.

The Army relies on people at all levels to operate as members of a coherent team in order to ensure mission accomplishment. Senior leaders need to understand the importance of the Army’s most important asset – its people. Strategic hiring, professional education and development, on-going training and career guidance are

investments that will pay high dividends in terms of organizational efficiencies and cost avoidance. More importantly, these “people policies” will generate adaptable leaders, foster employee loyalty, enhanced job satisfaction, and provides DAC’s with a clear sense of purpose.

While Army Civilians have come a long way from the days of the Revolutionary war, they have a long way to go. It is the leader who will provide the direction for the long journey. DAC leaders must strategically hire and actively develop their employees. They must capitalize on the investment and provide vision and lead the organization to accomplishment of that vision. Finally, our leaders must help those they lead to reach their full potential, and encourage them to lead beyond their formal sphere of influence during each of their assignments. Today’s leaders’ greatest responsibility is to prepare future leaders.

Endnotes

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